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EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

by

Pierre Auguste Renoir

From November fourteenth to
December fifth

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DURAND-RUEL GALLERIES
WEST THIRTY-SIXTH STREET
NEW YORK

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PIERRE AUGUSTE RENOIR

(Born at Limoges, 25th February, 1841)



THE work of AUGUSTE RENOIR extends without interruption over a period of forty years. It appears to sum up the ideas and methods of Impressionist art so completely that, should it alone be saved from a general destruction, it would suffice to bear witness to this entire art movement. It has unfolded itself from 1865 to our days with a happy magnificence, and it allows us to distinguish several periods, in the technique at least, since the variety of its subjects is infinite. Like Manet, and like all truly great and powerful painters, M. Renoir has treated almost everything, nudes, portraits, subject pictures, seascapes and still-life, all with equal beauty.

His first manner shows him to be a very direct descendant of Boucher. His female nudes are altogether in eighteenth century taste and he uses the same technique as Boucher: fat and sleek paint of soft brilliancy, with precise strokes round the principal values; pink and ivory tints relieved by strong blues similar to those of enamels; the light distributed everywhere and almost excluding the opposition of the shadows; and, finally, vivacious attitudes and an effort towards decorative convention. Nevertheless, his Bathers, of which he has painted a large series, are in many ways thoroughly modern and personal. What Renoir sees in the nude is less the line, than the brilliancy of the epidermis; the luminous, nacreous substance of the flesh: it is the "ideal clay;" and in this he shows the vision of a poet; he transfigures reality, but in a very different sense from that of the School. Renoir's woman comes from a primitive dreamland; she is an artless, wild creature, blooming in perfumed scrub. He sets her in backgrounds of foilage or of blue, foam-fringed torrents. She is a luxuriant, firm, healthy and naïve woman with

a powerful body, a small head, her eyes wide open, thoughtless, brilliant and ignorant, her lips blood-red and her nostrils dilated ; she is a gentle being, like the women of Tahiti, born in a tropical clime where vice is as unknown as shame, and where entire ingenuousness is a guarantee against all indecency. One cannot but be astonished at this mixture of "Japanism," savagism and eighteenth century taste, which constitutes inimitably the nude of Renoir.

M. Renoir's second manner is more directly related to the Impressionist methods : it is that of his landscapes, his flowers and his portraits. Here one can feel his relationship with Manet and with Claude Monet. These pictures are hatchings of colors accumulated to render less the objects than their transparency across the atmosphere. The portraits are frankly presented and broadly executed. The artist occupies himself in the first place with getting correct values and an exact suggestion of depth. He knows how to interpret nature in a certain sense ; how to stop in time ; how to suggest by leaving a part apparently unfinished ; how to indicate, behind a

figure, the sea or some landscape with just a few broad touches which suffice to suggest it without usurping the principal part. His strange coloring and his gifts of grasping nature and of ingenuity—strangers to all decadent complexity—have allowed him to rank among the best of those who have expressed childhood in its true aspect, without overloading it with over-precocious thoughts. Finally, Renoir is a painter of flowers of dazzling variety and exquisite splendor. They supply him with inexhaustible pretexts for suave and subtle harmonies.

His third manner has surprised and deceived certain admirers of his. It seems to mix his two first techniques. He searches for certain accords and contrasts almost analogous to the musical dissonances. He realizes incredible "false impressions." He seems to take as themes oriental carpets: he abandons realism and style and conceives symphonies. He pleases himself in assembling those tones which one is generally afraid of using: Turkish pink, lemon, crushed strawberry and viridian. Sometimes he amuses himself with amassing faded colors which would be dishearten-

ing with others, but out of which he can extract a harmony. Sometimes he plays with the crudest colors. One feels disturbed, charmed, disconcerted, as one would before an Indian shawl, a barbaric piece of pottery or a Persian miniature, and one refrains from forcing into the limits of a definition this exceptional virtuoso whose passionate love of color overcomes every difficulty. It is in this most recent part of his evolution, that Renoir appears the most capricious and the most poetical of all the painters of his generation. The flowers find themselves treated in various techniques according to their own character: the gladioles and roses in pasty paint, the poor flowers of the field are defined by a cross-hatching of little touches. Influenced by the purple shadow of the large flower-decked hats, the heads of young girls are painted on coarse canvas, sketched in broad strokes, with the hair in one color only. Some of his landscapes are as beautiful as those of Claude Monet. His nudes are as masterly in painting as Manet's and more supple. His great modern compositions are equal to the most beautiful works by Manet and Degas.

The race speaks in him. It is inexplicable that he should not have met with startling success, since he is voluptuous, bright, happy and learned without heaviness. One has to attribute his relative isolation to the violence of the controversies, and particularly to the dignity of a poet gently disdainful of public opinion and paying attention solely to painting, his great and only love. Manet has been a fighter whose works have created scandal. Renoir has neither shown, nor hidden himself: he has painted according to his dream, spreading his works, without mixing up his name or his personality with the tumult that raged around his friends. And now, for that very reason, his work appears fresher and younger, more primitive and candid, more intoxicated with flowers, flesh and sunlight.

From "The French Impressionists," by

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR.

PAINTINGS

- 1.—Femme à l'ombrelle, 1873
- 2.—Jeune mère et enfants, 1874
- 3.—Jeune femme se coiffant, 1875
- 4.—Femme à l'ombrelle, 1877
- 5.—Jeune femme au piano, 1878
- 6.—La route, 1879
- 7.—Le déjeuner, 1879
- 8.—Fruits du midi, 1881
- 9.—Algerienne assise, 1881
- 10.—Vue de Naples, 1881

- 11.—Femme et enfant, 1881
- 12.—Chrysanthèmes, 1882
- 13.—Fillette au faucon, 1882
- 14.—Pivoines, 1882
- 15.—Route de Berneval, 1883
- 16.—Marine—Capri, 1883
- 17.—Brouillard à Guernsey, 1883
- 18.—Paysanne appuyée contre un grillage en fer,
[1884
- 19.—Gladioli, 1884
- 20.—Deux femmes assises, 1885-1892

21.—Femmes à leur toilette, 1886. (Pastel)

22.—Baigneuse, 1887

23.—Tête de jeune fille, 1888

24. La Seine à Argenteuil, 1888

25.—Tête d'enfant, 1888. (Pastel)

26.—La lecture, 1889

27.—La lecture, 1889

28.—Vue de Mourillon, 1890

29.—Marchande de pommes, 1890

30.—Tête de jeune fille, 1890

31.—Leçon de piano, 1891. (Pastel)

32.—La lecture, 1891

33.—Un jardin à Sorrente, 1892

34.—Noirmontier : paysage, 1892

35.—Antibes, 1893

36.—Environs de Briey, Lorraine, 1899

37.—Baigneuse debout, 1902

38.—Jeune fille cousant, 1903

39.—Buste de femme, 1903

40.—Jeune fille arrangeant ses boucles d'oreille,
[1906]

41.—Jeune fille au fichu blanc, 1907